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# WEATHERWISE

THE MAGAZINE ABOUT WEATHER

DAVID M. LUDLUM, Editor

## Hurricane Celia

**H**URRICANE CELIA after a steady passage northwestward across the Gulf of Mexico smashed into the Corpus Christi Bay area of Texas soon after 1500 CST on 3 August 1970 with devastating effect. It earned the designation "extreme" as a result of the terrific wind force which caused enormous structural damage—the greatest ever experienced in a Texas storm. Early estimates place the figure at \$400 million.

At the cooperative station of Robert L. Herndon at Aransas Pass on the north side of the bay, the anemometer blew away when winds exceeded 150 mph on the approach of the storm. Aransas Pass was in the northern sector of the eye for about 30 minutes. Wind blasts were even greater after the passage of the eye. Herndon estimated these as high as 160 to 180 mph from the southwest. The maximum observed at the Corpus Christi weather bureau, also after the passage of the center, was a gust of 161 mph at 1628 from the west-southwest. A peak gust of 138 mph was reported at the Reynolds Metal Plant at Gregory on the north side of the bay.

The lowest station pressure on land was 949.2mb/28.03" at 1545 CST at Aransas Pass.

The highest tides generated by Celia were 9.2 ft. mean sea level at Port Aransas Beach and 9.0 ft. at Port Aransas Jetty, occurring about 1340 CST on the 3d.

The heaviest rainfall was in the immediate Corpus Christi area where 6.0 to 6.5 inches fell. General rains of 3.0 to 4.0 inches accompanied the westward movement of the storm across south Texas.

Celia brought mainly wind damage and not tidal destruction. The Red Cross estimated that 8,950 homes were destroyed, 13,850 homes suffered major damage, and 41,800 minor damage. Destroyed or damaged were 252 small businesses, 331 boats, and 310 farm buildings. Data supplied by Robert B. Orton, ESSA State Climatologist, Austin, Texas. (See page 186 for Herndon's hourly log.)

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Tracers in the Air —Alfred K. Blackadar and John A. Dutton .....	182	Front cover: The front page of the <i>Lubbock Avalanche-Journal</i> for 13 May 1970 shows the damaged First National Bank-Pioneer Gas building and the remnant of an automobile resting in a tree near the Country Club addition. Photos courtesy of the <i>Avalanche-Journal</i> .	

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